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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENTS IN WALLONIA AND BRUSSELS IN PLACE

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New Walloon and Brdamaged the Socialist Party's reputation, the coalition parties have reached agreement on a number of good governance principles. Ambitious plans for limiting parliamentarians' right to hold more than one post at once (e.g. mayor and MP), and an Ecolo initiative to abolish the provinces, will only be implemented with a delay of several years, if at all. All the plans of the Francophone leader are handicapped by the precarious budget situation in Wallonia and in Brussels. Nevertheless, Wallonia and the Francophone Community hope to balance their books by the year 2015, i.e., by the end of the term of this government.

Demotte in a dual capacity

13. The new Walloon regional government is composed of Minister-President Rudy Demotte (PS), and incumbent ministers Andre Antoine (CDH), Jean-Claude Marcourt (PS), and Benoit Lutgen (CDH). The newcomers are Jean-Marc Nollet (Ecolo), Philippe Henry (Ecolo), Paul Furlan (PS), and Eliane Tillieux (PS). Whereas in Flanders economic and cultural and educational competencies are merged in a single parliament, Francophone Belgium still has a Walloon regional government dealing with economic matters, and a Francophone Community government in charge of cultural and educational affairs. To have better synergy and to strengthen the bond between Wallonia and Brussels, a number of ministers will operate in a dual capacity and be ministers in both governments, as was the case during the previous five years. Demotte will be Minister-President of the Francophone Community Government, and the Walloon regional ministers Nollet, Antoine and Marcourt will also serve in both governments. The other Francophone Community ministers are Marie-Dominique Simonet (CDH), Fadila Laanan (PS), and Evelyne Huytebroeck (Ecolo), who is also a minister in the Brussels regional government.

Avoiding Linguistic Warfare

14. Since the Brussels regional government is composed of both Francophone and Flemish political parties, the Brussels negotiators sought to avoid linguistic fireworks. The document signed among the six parties concentrates on public transportation, housing, and ways to deal with the worrying unemployment rate in the capital region. Brussels has in recent years had a demographic boost due to immigration, and scores of young immigrants have great problems finding jobs. This is the fourth Brussels regional government headed by Charles Picque (PS). Benoit Cerexhe (CDH) and Huytebroeck are the other ministerial mainstays of the team. Emir Kir (PS) is an incumbent minister who is immensely popular within the Turkish community of Brussels. Brigitte Grouwels (CD&V) was junior minister in the previous government, and her position is now being upgraded to full minister. The newcomers to the Brussels government are: Christos Doulkeridis (Ecolo), who conducted the coalition negotiations for his party, Jean-Luc Vanraes (Open VLD), who

replaces Guy Van Hengel, who has been promoted to the rank of vice-premier in the federal government, and Bruno De Lille, the Flemish Green (Groen) minister in the Brussels government.

Di Rupo in command

15. In stark contrast with Flanders where the outgoing Minister-President Kris Peeters chaired the regional government formation talks, the agreement reached in Francophone Belgium is the

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joint handiwork of the party presidents Elio Di Rupo (PS), Joelle Milquet (CDH) and Jean-Michel Javeau (Ecolo). Di Rupo has once again demonstrated that he is the unchallenged political leader of Francophone Belgium. Through Minister-Presidents Demotte and Picque, Di Rupo will exercise real control over the Francophone regional governments. The allocation of ministerial portfolios, with ministers operating in two governments at once, is not only due to the country's complex institutional makeup, but also reflects the determination of the Francophone political leaders to strengthen the institutional link between Wallonia and Brussels, or the Wallonia-Brussels Federation as it is often called in the Francophone political world.

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